

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

August 1, 2016

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

Present: Arland Rasmussen, Chad Peterson, Mary Scherling, Rick Steen, Brian Hagen, Glenn Ellingsberg

Absent: Ken Pawluk

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the July 5, 2016 Board minutes. Mr. Ellingsberg seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Budget Presentation

Mr. Ammerman presented the Board with an updated budget proposal packet, stating there is a potential for updates from the State and County Auditor that may change the proposal at the time of the budget hearing. Mr. Ammerman also provided a response from Eide Bailly regarding their instructions on hiring and an overtime report that was requested at the July 5, 2016 meeting.

Between 2010 until 2017, there was an increase in the expenditure history for the agency. The increase of revenue compared to the average budget expenditure is \$504,000. This includes the \$2.1 million of costs used to run the program the State took over in 2016. Mr. Ammerman explained the projection for the 2017 Social Welfare Fund (SWF) balance will be \$2.056 million based on the 2016 balance. At the current pace, it is estimated the agency will end 2016 with a \$2.1 million balance.

Mr. Ammerman explained the agency has been trying to deficit spend over the last 15 years from the SWF, due to a considerably higher balance than expected by the Auditor's Office. The agency is legally required to maintain a 10% minimum balance of the total expenditures in the SWF. Currently, the account maintains a 14-18% balance. In the last couple years, expenditures at the end of the year have been much lower than anticipated, primarily due to retirements and shifting of salaries. Mr. Ammerman shared the Auditor is currently projecting \$21,826 will be taken out of the SWF compared to the budgeted amount of \$154,282.

Cass County Social Services currently has 143.9 full-time staff. In the last seven years, the agency has added 18.8 full-time positions and reduced 5.7 full-time positions. The County Homemaker's program was discontinued in 2013, reducing staff by 3.7 FTE. By discontinuing the program and contracting with other resources in the community, this saved the agency \$76,573. The additional positions reduced were a Human Service Aide in 2012 and the Business Manager in 2016. The tasks performed by the Business Manager were distributed to other staff, including Mr. Ammerman and Sarah in the Auditor's Office. There is no money exchanged with this arrangement between the Auditor's Office and Social Services.

Mr. Ammerman described the difficulties Economic Assistance Support Staff, Legal Department and Foster Care Licensing are experiencing due to inadequate staffing including backlog of case file updates, returned mail processing and contacting families interested in becoming licensed foster parents. Since 2014, the Legal Department's caseloads have nearly doubled. This is due to the increase in more intense child welfare cases involving drugs or significant injuries to

children. The Legal Department has had to decline involvement due to time constraints. They have referred one case to the State's Attorney's Office and there are six cases Mr. Ammerman and Pat Podoll, Family Services Manager, are reviewing to determine if the agency should assume the liability or if they should be referred to Birch Burdick as well.

When the State took over some of the child welfare costs, they identified there would be a cap on how much a county could have in their budget. Anything above that needed a Department of Human Service Center approval. Cass County's cap identified by the State for 2017 is \$12,942,459. In 2017, the projected revenue is \$12,884,110, which is a difference of \$58,349. Mr. Ammerman discussed the reductions from the 2016 budget including the In-Lieu of rent, which is money the State funnels through our county budget to be able to pay the State for some of the rent expenses we have. This is increasing from \$48,000 to \$63,000 plus an additional \$55,000 for cost allocation, which adds \$15,000 to the agency's budget. There was also a total proposed reduction of \$42,200 from the initial proposal from other various line items.

Positions recommended to be added in 2017 would be one Economic Assistance Support Staff; four Economic Assistance Eligibility Workers (two in Generic; two in Aged & Disabled); increase the current social worker position from a .8 to a 1.0 FTE to assist with Day Care Licensing requirements; increase current Child Care Self-Declared position from .8 to 1 FTE; add a .5 Social Worker position to assist in completing Foster Care Licensing requests and add a .5 Attorney for a total cost of \$457,221. The recommendation also includes additional costs of \$7,800 to the contracted services for additional time to assist Economic Assistance Support Staff in scanning and returned mail, as well as \$20,000 for the transportation of Foster Children. The total cost for increased expenditures for the 2017 budget would be \$485,021.

In summary, Mr. Ammerman again stated the State Expenditure Cap is \$12.9 million. The revenues are projected to be \$12.88 million with expenditures at \$12.86 million at this time, bringing the agency under the cap by \$78,653. There will be \$20,304 added to the SWF with the proposed expenditures compared to revenues. Mr. Ammerman explained the 14% needed to maintain the minimum in the SWF is at \$1.8 million with a projected balance following the 2017 Budget proposal, which includes Adult Protective Services costs, would be at \$2.056 million. At the last Board meeting, Mr. Ammerman was asked what the agency projects for the 2018 budget based upon the initial proposal going to the legislature. It is anticipated the State, based on our caseloads, will add \$1.2 million into the agency's budget in revenues if they take over the funding completely.

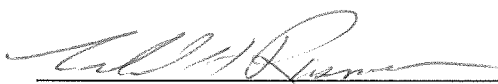
Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to approve the budget proposal as submitted to present to the County Commission at the budget hearing. Mr. Peterson seconded it. On roll call, motion carried unanimously.

III. Operating Report

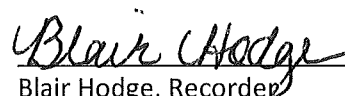
There was no discussion on the report provided.

IV. Adjournment

Mr. Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 pm. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.



Arland Rasmussen, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Blair Hodge, Recorder